



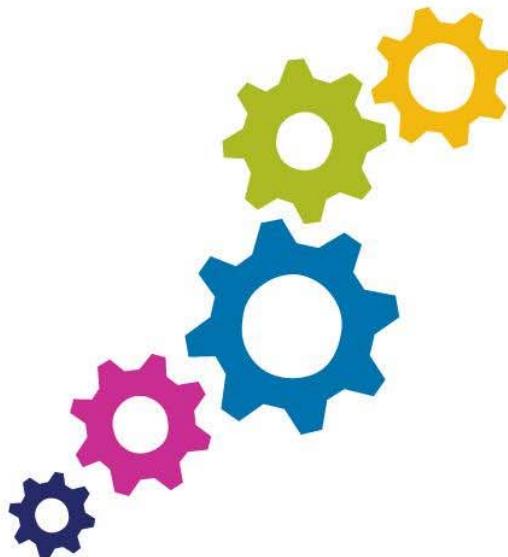
**Evidence for
Excellence in
Education**

Interim Report

The SpringBoard Bursary Foundation Impact Assessment: Year 1

October 2014

National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER)



- independent
- insights
- breadth
- connections
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The SpringBoard Bursary Foundation Impact Assessment: Year 1

Emily Buchanan
Eleanor Stevens
Suzanne Straw

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The Mere, Upton Park, Slough, Berkshire SL1 2DQ
www.nfer.ac.uk

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Contents

Summary of findings from Year 1	v
1 About The SpringBoard Bursary Foundation	v
2 About the impact assessment	v
3 How are pupils being prepared and supported?	vi
4 How well are pupils settling at their new school?	vii
5 What impacts are emerging?	vii
6 Conclusions	x
7 Recommendations for the ongoing development of SpringBoard	x
8 Future research activity	xi
1. About The SpringBoard Bursary Foundation	1
2. About the impact assessment	4
2.1 How is data being collected?	4
2.2 What consultations have been undertaken so far?	5
3. How are pupils being prepared and supported?	7
3.1 Support provided by partner organisations	8
3.2 Support provided by schools	9
3.3 Support provided by SpringBoard	12
3.4 How have pupils settled at their new school?	12
4. Impacts for pupils	15
4.1 Why did pupils apply to SpringBoard?	15
4.2 Impacts for SpringBoard pupils	15
4.3 Would SpringBoard pupils recommend SpringBoard to other young people?	19
5. Impacts on schools, families and home communities	21
5.1 Impacts on staff and the wider school community	21
5.2 Impacts on families and carers	23
5.3 Impacts on pupils' home communities	24
6. How could the programme be improved?	26
7. Conclusions and recommendations	27
Recommendations for the ongoing development of SpringBoard	27
8. References	28
Appendix 1	29

Summary of findings from Year 1

1 About The SpringBoard Bursary Foundation

The SpringBoard Bursary Foundation ('SpringBoard') was established in 2012. It exists to transform the lives of disadvantaged children through the provision of full bursaries at state and independent boarding schools. Through its partners, which include other charities, state day schools and local authority virtual schools, SpringBoard identifies pupils from low income families and genuinely disadvantaged backgrounds who have the potential to thrive in a boarding school environment. SpringBoard has a wider agenda of increasing social mobility; young people benefitting from SpringBoard are supported to help raise educational aspirations in their home communities through sharing their experiences and acting as mentors to other young people.

SpringBoard's mission is to:

- offer life-transforming opportunities for disadvantaged children by widening educational and social opportunities through the delivery of full bursaries for them to attend state and independent boarding schools
- work closely with schools and partners to ensure that each child is nurtured in a coherent and cohesive pastoral environment.
- urge its pupils to maintain close contact with their home communities during school holidays and after leaving school, in order to disseminate their experiences and extend the impact of those experiences by motivating, mentoring and raising aspirations amongst their home community.

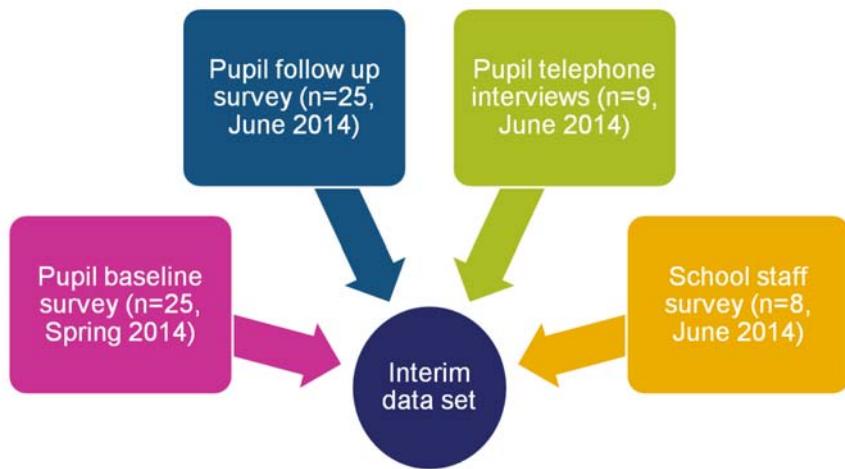
The first cohort of 25 pupils started at one of ten boarding schools in September 2013. Thirty-six pupils started at 23 boarding schools in September 2014 and an estimated 60 pupils will benefit from September 2015.

2 About the impact assessment

SpringBoard commissioned the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) to undertake an evaluation of its activities and impacts between 2013 and 2018. This first interim report is based on our consultations with SpringBoard pupils and member schools, as set out in Figure 1.

Given the small number of pupils (25) placed in schools during SpringBoard's first year of operation, our findings must be treated with some caution.

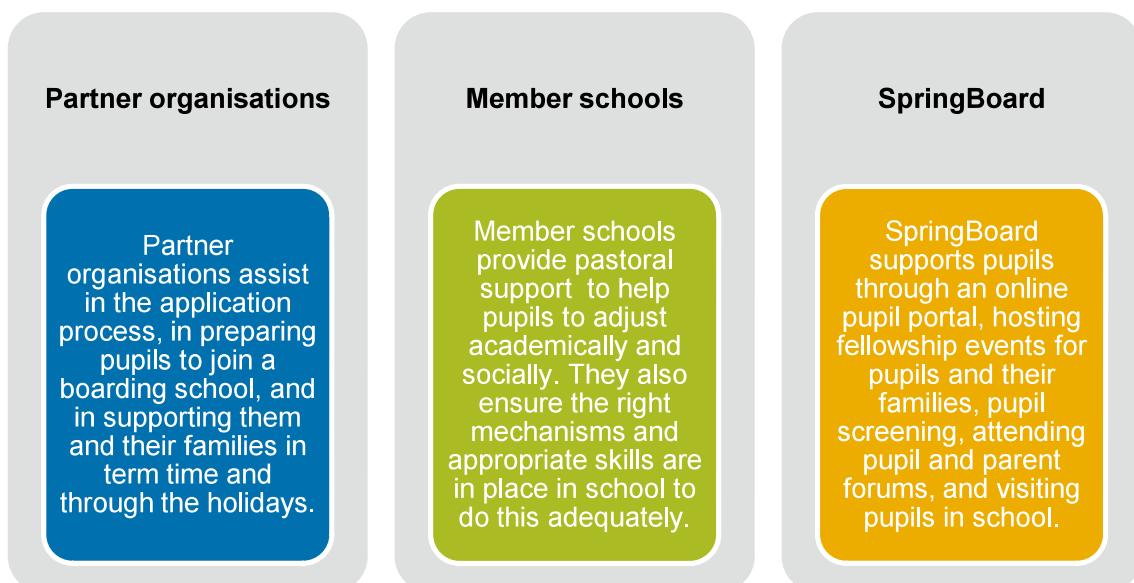
Figure 1: Consultations undertaken to date



3 How are pupils being prepared and supported?

Part of what is unique about The SpringBoard Bursary Foundation is that it works closely with its partners and member schools to ensure that pupils are well suited and prepared for a boarding education, to match each pupil to the right school for them, and to ensure each pupil receives high-quality help and support, all year round (see Figure 2). Schools wishing to work with SpringBoard need to go through a rigorous accreditation process and only those awarded accreditation can receive SpringBoard pupils. Partners must also successfully complete an assessment process before they work with SpringBoard. SpringBoard employs a Director of Partner Relationships and a Director of School Relationships to focus on developing and monitoring the support given to pupils, as well as to target the most appropriate pupils, and grow its partner organisations and member schools.

Figure 2: Support provided to SpringBoard pupils



4 How well are pupils settling at their new school?

- SpringBoard pupils have made a **successful transition to boarding school** and nearly all pupils report **feeling part of their new school community**.
- Pupils are **very positive about the support from partners**. A small number of pupils felt their partner organisation could have offered more support in the first few weeks of term, prepared them better for the expected standard of school work and offered more support during the school holidays.
- **Pupils feel that their schools have done all they can to help them settle in at school.** Pupils initially faced difficulties such as homesickness and some found it hard to adjust to the required academic standards, but support from school staff and participation in school life has helped them to overcome these difficulties.

5 What impacts are emerging?

Although findings to date are based on a small consultation, there is evidence that The SpringBoard Bursary Foundation is making strides towards fulfilling its aims and realising its intended impacts on pupils, their families, home communities and member schools. These impacts are outlined in the following sections. As these impacts have arisen from the very first year of school placements, these are impressive indications of future success.

Impacts on pupils

Intellectual and academic development

- **Boarding school has enhanced pupils' academic experience** in terms of, for instance, the range of subjects available, the quality of teaching and facilities, and the academically competitive environment.
- Pupils feel that their **boarding school is better at helping them to achieve their academic potential** (compared to their original school, or the school they otherwise would have attended).

Broadened horizons, raised aspirations and enhanced prospects

- Pupils feel that **being at boarding school will give them a better chance of getting a good job** than their original school (or the school they otherwise would have attended).
- **Being at boarding school has influenced half of all pupils' career aspirations**, and has encouraged them to aim higher.
- Pupils have **access to more extra-curricular opportunities, and opportunities to excel** in academic and/or extra-curricular pursuits.
- **All pupils feel that attending boarding school has changed their lives for the better** by, for instance, improving their prospects, changing their perspective on life and, for some, taking them away from negative influences in their home communities or schools.

Developed social skills, engagement, and awareness of social diversity

- Pupils have **developed their social skills and their confidence** and appreciate meeting people from diverse backgrounds.
- School staff note that pupils have become more **aware of social diversity**.
- Pupils and school staff have reported very few problems with pupils adjusting to their new peer group.

Increased independence, confidence and resilience

- Pupils note their **greater independence and personal responsibility**.
- Pupils recognise a **growth in their own resilience**, through adapting to living away from home.
- Pupils (particularly younger pupils) have **grown in confidence**.

Creation of a stable, secure environment

- Pupils are **happy at school, feel positive about themselves, and feel valued and cared for at school**.

Impacts on schools, families and home communities

Impacts for school staff

- Development of skills and personal satisfaction gained from the experience of working with a more diverse (and disadvantaged) group of pupils
- Enhanced communication skills through interacting with parents whose first language is not English.

Impacts on SpringBoard pupils' peers

- Half of all school respondents feel that having SpringBoard pupils in school has raised awareness of social diversity and broken down prejudice.
- Two schools noted that some peers resented SpringBoard pupils getting a full bursary, when their own parents were struggling to pay school fees.

Impacts on the wider school community

- Pupils have contributed to the school community through, for example, being elected to the student council or joining the local cadet core.
- Good experiences of accepting SpringBoard pupils can make schools more likely to want to support other bursary pupils in a similar way.

Impacts on pupils' families/carers and home communities

- Families/carers and friends at home are said to have reacted with feelings of pride and happiness when their child or peer has secured a bursary through SpringBoard.
- There has been a 'ripple effect' in some pupils' home communities where other young people are now aspiring to follow in the footsteps of SpringBoard pupils, or have raised their aspirations.

6 Conclusions

The early findings from the impact assessment are overwhelmingly positive; pupils and staff have reported remarkably few negative consequences of pupils moving to boarding schools. There are effective working relationships between the partner organisations, original and member schools, pupils and families/carers. Providing disadvantaged pupils with a place at a boarding school is leading to the impacts intended for pupils and member schools. For pupils, these include (amongst others) an improved academic experience, broadened horizons and aspirations, and greater confidence and resilience. There are promising signs that impacts are ‘rippling out’ to the home communities of SpringBoard pupils. The unique and comprehensive network of support that the SpringBoard model aims to provide appears central to its success.

7 Recommendations for the ongoing development of SpringBoard

- Partners have a key role to play in supporting young people before and during their time at school, including in the school holidays. **Some partners need to contact the pupil(s) they have placed more regularly, particularly during the pupil's first few months at their new school.**
- Many pupils struggle with the level of school work at first. Some partners have arranged specific academic support for pupils before they join their new school, and/or during school holidays (for instance, tuition in maths). **All partners should support pupils to prepare for the expected standard of work, by sharing information from the member school about the academic requirements and syllabuses used with the pupil, and by brokering additional tuition where needed.**
- A number of member schools have provided additional, personalised tuition to students in subjects in which they have been used to a different teaching style and/or syllabus and have struggled to adjust. This has been particularly important in the first term. **It would be useful for schools more universally to assess pupils' individual needs and provide this additional tuition, where required.**
- It is important that SpringBoard encourages the growing number of member schools and partners to continue to share effective practice, by offering further events and brokering networks to support this.**
- Partner organisations should ensure they create opportunities for SpringBoard pupils to speak to other young people in their home communities about their experiences; pupils value these opportunities and they can help to promote raised aspirations.**
- There is emerging evidence of a ‘ripple effect’ on pupils’ home communities. **Carrying out direct consultations with families/carers and others in pupils’ home communities would offer more robust evidence of the broader aim.**

8 Future research activity

We will continue to consult with school staff and with SpringBoard pupils who joined boarding schools in 2013 and 2014 during 2014-16, increasing the overall number of participants and the robustness of the dataset. We will also be analysing pupils' attainment and progression using the National Pupil Database (NPD)¹ to compare the attainment of SpringBoard pupils at GCSE and A-level with a matched comparison group of pupils from their original schools. Pupils in Cohorts 1 and 2 are involved in all elements of the research activities. At this stage, Cohort 3 pupils will only be included for the NPD analysis although this is being reviewed. We will produce subsequent reports yearly throughout the evaluation period, with the final report due in 2018.

¹ The National Pupil Database (NPD) contains detailed information about pupils in schools and colleges in England. The data includes test and exam results, prior attainment and progression at different Key Stages for pupils in the state sector, and attainment data for students in non-maintained special schools, sixth-form and further education colleges.

1. About The SpringBoard Bursary Foundation

The SpringBoard Bursary Foundation ('SpringBoard') was established in 2012. It is a pioneering charity that offers fully-funded places at accredited state and independent boarding schools ('member schools') to disadvantaged pupils who will best benefit from a boarding education but whose parents cannot afford the fees. SpringBoard was inspired by The Arnold Foundation, which offers disadvantaged children full bursaries to attend Rugby School. NFER's evaluation of the Arnold Foundation (Lamont *et al.*, 2010) strongly endorsed its work, and there was demand for an organisation such as SpringBoard to work with other boarding schools to lead a national roll out of a similar scheme. SpringBoard's mission is to:

- offer life-transforming opportunities for disadvantaged children by widening their educational and social opportunities through the delivery of full bursaries for them to attend state and independent boarding schools
- work closely with schools and partners to ensure that each child is nurtured in a coherent and cohesive pastoral environment
- urge its pupils to maintain close contact with their home communities during school holidays and after leaving school, in order to disseminate their experiences and extend the impact of those experiences by motivating, mentoring and raising aspirations amongst their home community.

In order to identify and recruit suitable pupils, SpringBoard works with partner organisations, many of which are already engaged in working with disadvantaged young people. They include charities, state day schools and local authority virtual schools. SpringBoard works closely with its partners to recruit eligible pupils, and select those who will most benefit from Springboard's help: it is not about finding the most gifted and talented young people. SpringBoard's selection criteria are shown in the diagram below.

SpringBoard pupils must meet the following criteria:



Pupils must be able to meet the usual entry requirements of the school they will attend and they are helped to adjust through a supportive pastoral care system. Schools wishing to work with SpringBoard are required to go through a rigorous accreditation process and only those awarded accreditation can receive SpringBoard pupils. Partners must also successfully complete an assessment process before they work with SpringBoard.

SpringBoard raises funds from donors for the bursaries, while some are paid in whole or in part by member schools themselves. The first cohort of 25 pupils started at one of ten boarding schools in September 2013. Thirty-seven pupils started at 23 boarding schools in September 2014 and an estimated 60 pupils will benefit from September 2015.

SpringBoard intends that its pupils, in addition to benefiting personally from a broadening of their social and educational opportunities, will help to raise educational aspirations in their home communities through sharing their experiences and acting as a mentor to other young people. It is important that the benefits go beyond impacts on individual pupils.

SpringBoard's wider agenda is to lead and support an increase in social mobility through widening educational opportunity.

In undertaking its work, SpringBoard is keen to measure the impacts and to learn from evidence of best practice. In doing this, it is tracking the impacts on pupils of attending boarding schools. Pupils are being tracked to the age of 25 years and, in the same time period, impacts on pupils' home communities are also being assessed. SpringBoard aims to realise the following impacts for pupils, amongst others:

- help pupils to feel secure and supported during term time and in the school holidays
- broaden horizons and raise aspirations and perceptions of what is possible
- improve social skills and social engagement and open up other opportunities and support that arise from new friendships
- increase independence, well-being, confidence and resilience

- expand intellectual capacity and improve academic performance
- enhance prospects for further education, employment and careers
- increase and enhance social mobility through widening educational opportunities.

More broadly, the programme aims to break down prejudice and social jealousy and raise awareness of social diversity and the concept of privilege amongst SpringBoard pupils and their peers.

2. About the impact assessment

In September 2013, SpringBoard commissioned the NFER to undertake an evaluation of its activities and impacts. The evaluation is running until December 2018. This is the first interim report based on consultations with SpringBoard pupils and member schools.

Subsequent reports are planned for 2015, 2016 and 2018. Given the small number of pupils placed in schools during SpringBoard's first year of operation, the findings in this report must be treated with some caution.

2.1 How is data being collected?

The aim of the impact assessment is to explore the effectiveness and impacts of SpringBoard. In terms of impacts, the primary focus is on SpringBoard pupils but impacts on other pupils and staff within boarding schools, and families and home communities are also being explored. The evaluation design includes the collection and triangulation of a range of data.

2.1.1 Research with pupils

The impact assessment includes research with the first three cohorts of SpringBoard pupils joining the scheme in 2013 (Cohort 1), 2014 (Cohort 2) and 2015 (Cohort 3). SpringBoard pupils can join the scheme at age 11, 12, 13 or 16 years of age.

Table 1 provides an overview of the total numbers of pupils entering SpringBoard schools in Cohort 1 and 2, and predicted numbers for Cohort 3. It also provides information on the ages of pupils when they joined, and the numbers of state schools they came from.

Table 1 Pupils awarded SpringBoard bursaries, 2013-15

Date started/starting	Number of SpringBoard pupils	Number of schools they came from	Number of member schools they went to	Age of SpringBoard pupils			
				11	12	13+	16+
2013	25	10	10	3	7	7	15
2014	36	29	19	1	1	12	22
2015 expected	60		20		20	20	

Source: *The SpringBoard Bursary Foundation, 2014*.

The research with pupils includes online surveys when they first join their new school, and towards the end of each academic year (baseline and follow-up surveys) for the duration of

the research. We are also carrying out telephone interviews with pupils and will be analysing attainment and progression using the National Pupil Database (NPD)². Pupils in Cohorts 1 and 2 are involved in all elements of the research activities. The current plan is for Cohort 3 pupils to be included only for the NPD analysis but this is under review.

The NPD analysis will compare the attainment of SpringBoard pupils at GCSE and A-level with a matched comparison group of pupils from their original schools. It will focus on pupils joining the scheme at age 13 and 16 who will complete GCSEs and A-levels during the timescale of the evaluation. Results of the analysis will be available in December 2016 and December 2018.

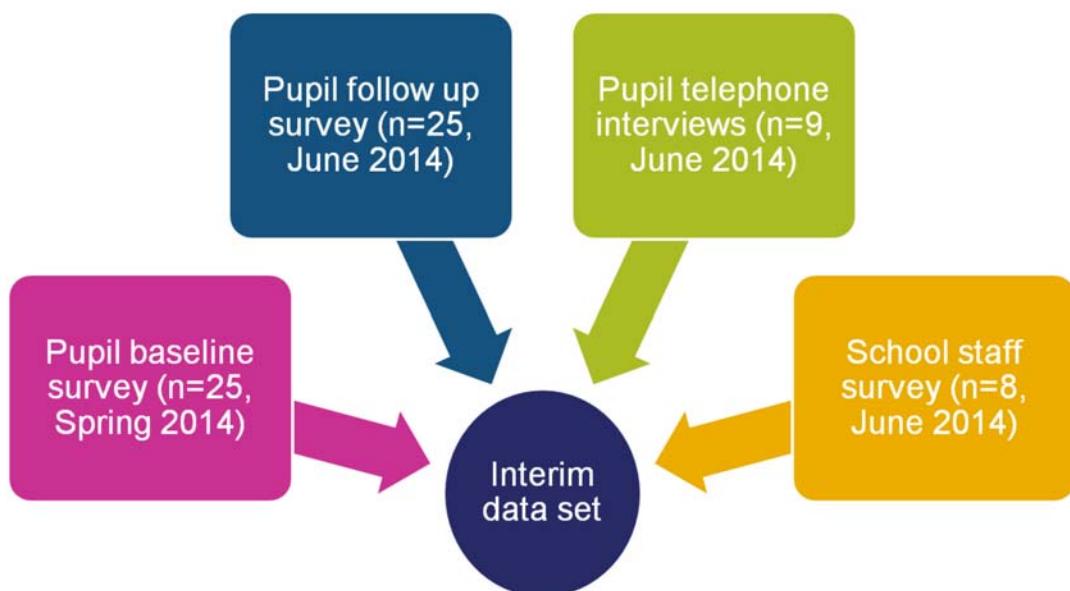
2.1.2 Research with staff

The impact assessment also includes research with member-schools' staff. Staff from SpringBoard schools are asked to complete an online survey at the end of each academic year.

2.2 What consultations have been undertaken so far?

The findings in this report are based on the consultation activities set out in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Consultations undertaken to date



² The National Pupil Database (NPD) contains detailed information about pupils in schools and colleges in England. The data includes test and exam results, prior attainment and progression at different Key Stages for pupils in the state sector, and attainment data for students in non-maintained special schools, sixth-form and further education colleges.

2.2.1 Consultation with pupils

Cohort 1 pupils completed baseline and follow-up online surveys during the 2013-2014 academic year. The baseline survey was administered in the spring term 2014 and the follow-up in the summer term 2014³. All 25 SpringBoard pupils completed both of the surveys.

In addition, nine pupils from nine different schools completed telephone interviews in the summer term of 2014. The pupils included eight boys and one girl: two pupils were in Year 7, two were in Year 9 and five were in Year 12.

The surveys and interviews explored pupils' expectations of the scheme, views on the effectiveness of the support they had received and the benefits and impacts realised to date.

2.2.2 Consultation with school staff

Eight staff from the ten member schools responded to an online survey in the summer term of 2014. The survey explored staff perceptions of the impacts of the programme on SpringBoard pupils, their peers in school and their home communities, as well as on staff and the school more generally. It also gained views on key success factors and gathered suggestions for improvements.

³ The baseline survey did not take place in the autumn of 2013 as planned due to delays in getting pupils' consent to participate in the research.

3. How are pupils being prepared and supported?

Part of what is unique about The SpringBoard Bursary Foundation is that it works closely with its partner organisations and member schools to ensure that pupils are well suited and prepared for a boarding education, to match each pupil to the right school for them, and to ensure each pupil receives high-quality help and support, all year round. Schools wishing to work with SpringBoard need to go through a rigorous accreditation process and only those awarded accreditation can receive SpringBoard pupils. Partners must also successfully complete an assessment process before they work with SpringBoard. SpringBoard employs a Director of Partner Relationships and a Director of School Relationships to focus on developing and monitoring the support given to pupils, as well as to engage and select the most appropriate pupils and grow its partner organisations and member schools.

Besides family/carers and friends at home, SpringBoard pupils benefit from a network of support before joining and at school and during the summer holidays (summarised in Figure 2 below). This section sets out the support provided by partner organisations and member schools, as well as that offered centrally by SpringBoard. It includes pupils' views, from the survey and interviews, on the support they are offered.

Figure 2: Sources of support for SpringBoard pupils



3.1 Support provided by partner organisations

The range of partner organisations that SpringBoard works with includes charity, state day schools and local authority virtual schools. Partner organisations typically:

- identify eligible pupils, and liaise with their families
- support pupils through entrance examinations, interviews and other screening activities
- prepare pupils for starting at boarding school
- support pupils during school holidays
- monitor pupils' progress at school, and provide term-time support
- support families through every step of the process, answering questions, setting expectations and giving encouragement.

3.1.1 Pupils' views of partner support

The level and quality of support provided by partners has varied; some partners have primarily supported pupils with the application process and others have maintained regular contact during term-time and holidays (e.g. via email or face-to-face contact). Overall, pupils were very positive about the support of organisations and individuals who had helped them to secure a place at boarding school.

Pupils were most positive about the support provided:

- to prepare them for the expected standard of behaviour/conduct
- throughout their first year at their new school.

Pupils were also positive about:

- the partner's role in explaining to their family what SpringBoard was about
- the support they had received to apply to SpringBoard
- the information they had received to help them feel comfortable starting at their new school.

Pupils taking part in the telephone interviews reported a range of support during the application process, such as: help to prepare for entrance exams/tests; being brought to the school to look around; and confidence building. In most cases, pupils had met with their partner organisations several times during the application process.

Pupils were a little less positive about the support received:

- to prepare them for the standard of school work
- during the first few weeks of term and the school holidays.

For example, one pupil reported that they not received any support from the partner until the last week of December, which 'was a bit worrying at times ... it started to feel stressful; it would have been helpful to have someone contacting me to ask if I was OK. After December they ... were more in contact'.

In terms of preparing them for the standard of school work, five pupils in the baseline survey felt that the partner was 'not very helpful' (although 11 pupils thought that they had been well prepared in this regard and some mentioned support with mathematics and encouragement to work hard). One pupil commented that it would have been useful if the partner had told them what GCSE topics pupils at the boarding school had covered so that they could have prepared during the summer holidays. Similarly, another pupil 'could have done with being more prepared for the level of work'.

Eight pupils had not received support during the school holidays. Of the 15 who had, nine found it 'very helpful' and six 'quite helpful'. Support in the school holidays that pupils found helpful included partners meeting with pupils to discuss progress or to support them with school work - primarily mathematics.

3.2 Support provided by schools

Member schools used a variety of mechanisms to ensure that pupils settled well at school and had a positive experience. Before joining the school, these included:

- sending information to pupils' original schools
- staff from SpringBoard schools visiting pupils in their original school or attending meetings about the prospective pupil (such as Personal Education Plan meetings or Looked After Children reviews)
- taster visits that included school tours and meeting with staff
- access to staff from their new school for help with queries during the summer holiday before they start
- summer activities before starting their new school (such as sports tours).

Once at school, support provided to pupils included:

- school induction programmes/activities to familiarise pupils with the school and help them to make friends
- welcome packs that introduced the pastoral team and explain the support available
- opportunities to meet staff, such as 'meet and greet' sessions, 'chill out' days with staff, open access to key staff to ask any questions
- additional academic tutoring
- mentoring (e.g. having a nominated 'big sister' in the year above, or a 'buddy')
- regular meetings of bursary students
- ongoing pastoral support from staff.

By the end of their first year at their new school, all interviewed pupils felt that they had become part of their school community and felt happy and settled, as this pupil remarked: 'I definitely feel part of the school community. I'm quite proud to have fitted in. It's not always easy for people to make a transition from another school, but I think I've done quite well'. Similarly, all but one pupil indicated in the survey that they felt part of the school community. Interviewed pupils felt that there was nothing that the school could have done better to help them to settle in, and were appreciative of the support that they had been provided with.

3.2.1 Does the support provided to SpringBoard pupils differ from that offered to other bursary students?

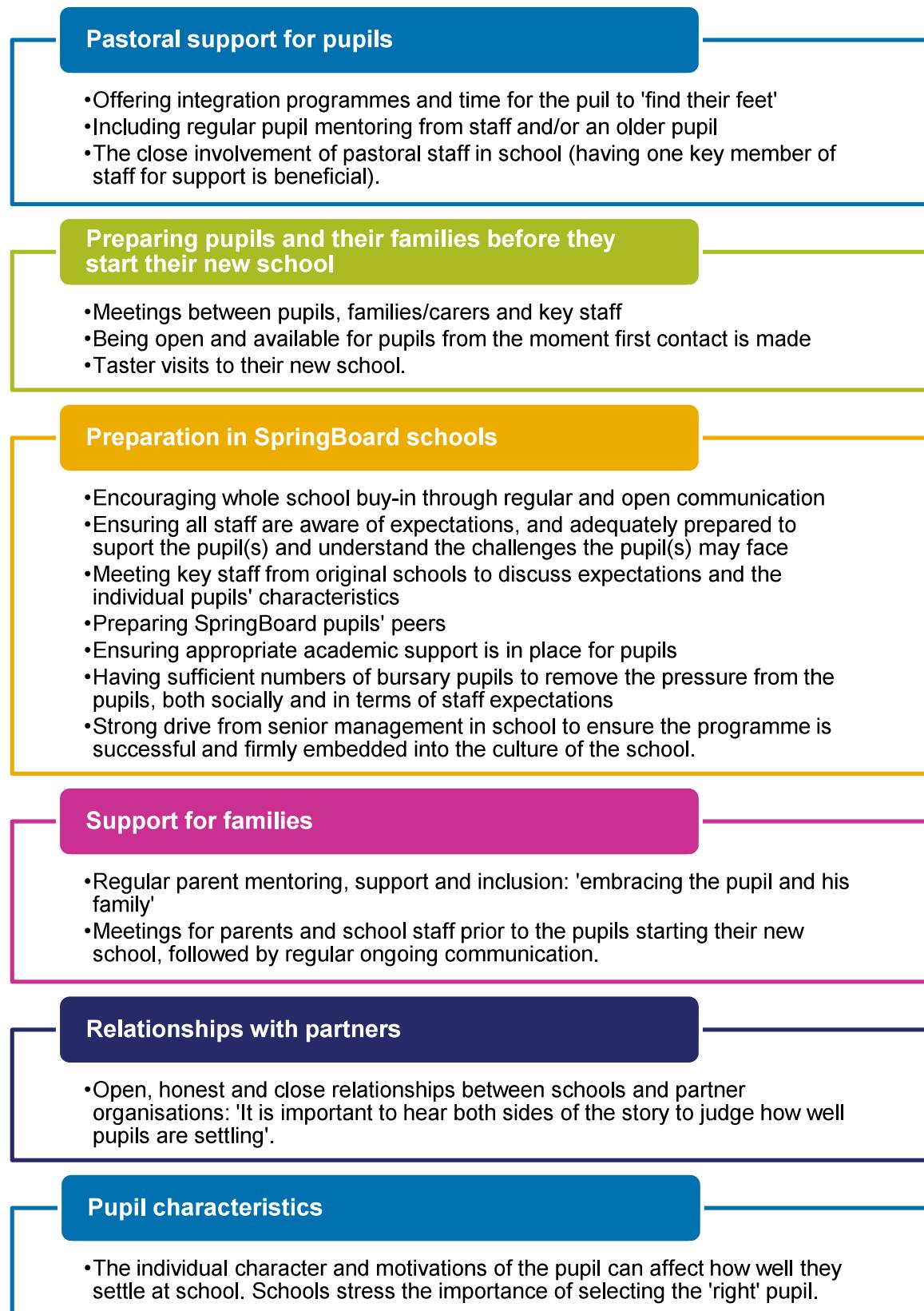
School survey respondents were asked how the support offered to SpringBoard pupils compared with support offered to other bursary pupils. In most cases, the support offered is no different. However, in four schools there were slight variations. For one school, the fact that their SpringBoard pupil(s) are Looked After Children⁴ means that school staff liaise closely with the team of professionals (such as social workers) that surround the child, as well as with foster carers and birth families. A second school visits the pupil at their original school and then arranges weekly tutor meetings once the pupil has joined their new school. Similarly, a third school offers pastoral support and supervision meetings which are exclusively for SpringBoard pupils, as well as weekly break-time meetings. Liaising with the partner organisation was an additional element of support mentioned by a fourth school.

3.2.2 Key factors for successful transition to, and integration in, boarding school

Staff were asked what they considered to be the key factors for successfully integrating SpringBoard pupils into the school. Comments most frequently related to preparing pupils before they joined the school, support provided in their first few weeks/months, and having staff in place who were well prepared to support pupils from different backgrounds. The suggested key factors and strategies are set out in Figure 3.

⁴ Looked After Children are under the care of their local authority.

Figure 3: Key factors for successful transition to, and integration in, boarding school



3.3 Support provided by SpringBoard

The SpringBoard Bursary Foundation also offers direct support to pupils (as well as to member schools and partners). This includes:

- overseeing the three-stage screening/application process
- hosting a pupil portal that contains information on boarding life from the perspective of SpringBoard pupils
- working with member schools and partners to ensure that pupils are getting the right kind of support, sharing best practice and monitoring activity
- hosting fellowship events for pupils and their families, partners and member schools to create a sense of identity and celebrate achievements.
- attending pupil and parent forums to gauge how pupils and families are doing
- visiting pupils in school.

3.4 How have pupils settled at their new school?

Pupils reported that they had settled in to their new school very well. Staff who responded to the survey echoed these reports. Nearly all surveyed pupils 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' that 'I feel comfortable at school' (two were unsure at the point of the follow up survey). Pupils commented that there were always staff available to help, if needed, which contributed to feelings of safety and wellbeing. Indeed, by the time of the follow-up survey, all pupils reported that they knew who to talk to if they had a problem at school.

At the time of the baseline survey, the majority of pupils strongly agreed that they liked boarding at school with one reporting that they did not know. By the follow-up survey, all students stated that they liked boarding at school, although a small number agreed as opposed to strongly agreed with this statement.

3.4.1 What initial concerns did pupils have?

Some pupils felt 'nervous' or 'scared' when they were first offered a place at their new school. They explained that this related to being away from home and boarding and to worries about not making friends, settling and fitting in, and not knowing what to expect. However, they felt that these worries did not 'play out' in reality.

Others felt that they would not have much free time but, again, their anxieties on this account were not realised and they enjoyed the wide range of activities that they had become involved in. Some pupils were also apprehensive about the difficulty of the academic work.

3.4.2 What difficulties were actually encountered?

Pupils were asked to what extent they had experienced difficulties since starting at their schools. Around half or more of the pupils had missed their home/family and/or missed friends at home. Interviewed pupils commented that they dealt with any **homesickness** by

regularly contacting family and friends. Some staff noted that their pupil(s) had faced challenges such as: homesickness and the change to boarding and sharing a room; feeling 'displaced'; lacking confidence, motivation or personal organisation; and adjusting their behaviour. Staff reflected that these challenges had largely been overcome, sometimes with the help of school pastoral staff and, where appropriate, with the involvement of the partner organisation or other agencies working with the pupil and their family.

Some pupils had been initially apprehensive about the **difficulty of the academic work**, and around half of all pupils stated that they had struggled in class and/or struggled with their 'prep'. Staff recognised that pupils had been working hard to adjust to the (often) greater academic expectations and standards, and the fast pace of curriculum delivery, and felt that pupils had made good progress in this regard. In particular, staff reported that it was more challenging for pupils entering Year 12 than Year 9 as they had to 'make a simultaneous jump to A-levels and to a new school'. In addition, some pupils had found it problematic completing work in the evenings and having closer relationships with teachers. Staff and pupils noted that extra support had been provided, such as tuition and mentoring on a one-to-one basis, to help pupils catch up in their school work. Around half of all pupils agreed that they had adjusted quite quickly to the academic demands and had received the support they needed. The following comments from pupils exemplify these findings.

To be honest I thought everyone would be so clever and I thought I'd be at the bottom of everything. I'm not, I think I'm doing quite well.

I did struggle, then I got used to it.

They get you on the right track even if it took one or two months to get into the swing of things.

Although many pupils were initially worried about making friends and whether they would fit in, by the end of their first year all pupils felt that they had adjusted well and that most people were welcoming and friendly. These findings are illustrated by these pupils' remarks.

I wasn't sure what kind of people I would meet or whether I'd get along with them ... you feel better about yourself when you know you've got people there who can help you.

I thought it would be harder to settle in than it was. I didn't really take into account how easy it was once you're living with people to get on with them.

I expected it to be difficult being away from home, I didn't expect it to be so family-like ... I thought that everyone would have paid a lot of money to come here, so they would be quite posh and stuck up. Actually it's surprised me how down to earth everyone is here, they're very welcoming.

Pupils largely indicated that they had rarely encountered negative reactions from others (e.g. family/friends/pupils), that they didn't find it hard to make friends, nor encountered problems

with boarding at school. However, one pupil felt he had faced ‘racial discrimination’ at school and another complained that some of her peers were ‘selfish and snobby’. Another pupil had found the intense nature of boarding school life challenging at times: ‘I have had negative reactions from some pupils - you’re never going to get on with everyone. That’s part of life. It gets stressful because it’s an eight week term, you get in each others’ way and start losing your patience with them’.

Staff views of pupils’ adjustment to the new social context were similar to the pupils’ views. Most staff reported that their pupil(s) had embraced school life, including participating in extra-curricular activities and making new friendships. Only one staff member mentioned that their pupil(s) had found it difficult to adjust to ‘wealthier company’.

3.4.3 How have pupils adjusted between home and school?

Interviewed pupils were asked how they had found going home in the holidays. They generally felt that they ‘fitted back in’ easily at home during the holidays, and that they were equally happy at school or at home. Some commented that they had initially found it strange to go home to a completely different routine and slower pace of life. Nearly all pupils responding to the follow-up survey ‘agreed’ or ‘strongly agreed’ that they felt ‘part of their home community’, suggesting that the feeling of ‘displacement’ mentioned by one member of staff was not common.

4. Impacts for pupils

4.1 Why did pupils apply to SpringBoard?

Within the baseline survey and interviews, pupils were asked about their reasons for applying to SpringBoard. The majority applied because of the range of academic and extra-curricular opportunities and experiences that joining a boarding school would open up, high-quality teaching, the better chance of academic and career success, the improved opportunity to reach their potential, and the hopes of securing a place at a good university. A number also said they applied because of the financial support that was provided. Pupils felt that their expectations were being fulfilled, as this interviewee's comments illustrate.

I applied to this school to reach above my potential in education, achieve an International Baccalaureate qualification, to give me an advantage against my competitors in succeeding in a top Russell Group university when I will be able to pursue my aspirations and become a barrister in corporate law.

4.2 Impacts for SpringBoard pupils

Pupils were asked to indicate realised or anticipated benefits of joining their boarding school. Often, questions were phrased in terms of a comparison with their previous ('original') school or with the school they would have attended had they not been accepted for a place at a boarding school. School staff were also asked about impacts on pupils.

The consultation suggests that SpringBoard is:

- ✓ Improving academic experience and raising attainment
- ✓ Broadening horizons, raising aspirations, enhancing prospects
- ✓ Improving communication and social skills and access to extra-curricular and social opportunities
- ✓ Increasing independence, confidence and resilience
- ✓ Providing a stable, secure environment

Further details on each of these areas are provided below.

4.2.1 Improving academic experience and raising attainment

Pupils felt that boarding school had **improved their academic experience** and, in some cases, **raised their attainment**. Nearly all pupils agreed with the statement that, compared to their original school, their boarding school will be 'better at helping me to achieve what I'm

capable of'. Pupils sometimes indicated that they were working harder at their current school than they used to at their previous school, and their responses also showed that many were finding their school work more challenging. One commented that the atmosphere in class is much more competitive than in their old school, where it was 'cool not to be clever'.

A few pupils noted that they had started the academic year at a disadvantage to peers who had studied a different syllabus. Although some had found it difficult to adjust to the pace and level of work, several were positive about the amount of support offered by the school, including support sessions and one to one help from teachers and personal tutors, including at the weekend. This support, the attention paid to them in (smaller) classes and the care taken by teachers to give feedback on their work had helped several pupils to catch up and feel more confident. Additionally, the structured prep time encouraged pupils to keep on top of homework, and not to let it build up, which some of them had done at their previous school. Other academic benefits mentioned by individual pupils by way of comparison with their original schools included:

- a different teaching style, with more constructive class discussion and less didactic teaching
- improved technology/science facilities, which meant they could 'make and do' more in lessons than would have been possible at their previous school
- learning about broader aspects of a subject, which encouraged them to be more interested in it
- having the opportunity to try new subjects such as German or Latin.

4.2.2 Broadening horizons, raising aspirations, enhancing prospects

Some pupils were already highly motivated to follow a particular career path before they changed schools, but they now linked their improved academic prospects with **better career prospects**. Most pupils 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' that being at their current school will 'give me a better chance of getting a good job.' For example, one pupil said 'I'll probably get into a better uni because of having come to this school, and [get] a better job'. High proportions expected to go on to higher education and most had at least one idea of what job they would like to do in the future. The most popular career choices included engineering, law, business management, medicine and science, showing that pupils were aiming high. Pupils were mostly confident that they could achieve their career goal, although many thought that the cost of higher education and the risk of not achieving the necessary grades to progress to university were potential barriers.

Half of all pupils felt that being at boarding school had influenced their career aspirations, and staff also noted changes in pupils' mindsets. Staff felt pupils were positively influenced by their boarding experiences with high expectations being 'the norm'. This included high aspirations in terms of future higher level study and careers, and in terms of the standards pupils set themselves as a member of society more generally. Some staff and pupils commented that their school's quality higher education and careers guidance and employment contacts (including work-experience placements) contributed to shaping and supporting pupils' aspirations. This was illustrated by one member of staff who said: 'Being

surrounded by high expectations and by structured guidance appears to be making a difference'.

All pupils agreed that attending boarding school had **changed their lives for the better**. They felt that they had changed their perspective on life and had 'turned over a new leaf'. In one case, the experience had made a pupil proud of where she came from and made her realise that aspiring to have more money should not be a goal in itself: 'I've learnt being rich isn't everything ... I'm proud of where I come from and wouldn't swap it to be rich.'

For some pupils, joining boarding school had given them greater confidence that they would succeed in life. Pupils thought that their experience of moving to a boarding school away from family and friends was a form of preparation for later challenges, such as going to university: 'Obviously it's a big move to come here so I know I can cope with big changes, I'm adaptable.' Some pupils had been inspired to take on more responsibility at school: '... people in the upper school take on responsibilities like prefect ... and it feels like I want to do that too. I want to be head boy!'

All but one pupil agreed that being at a boarding school had opened up new possibilities. Two thirds thought that, if they had not been selected to attend boarding school and had instead stayed at or gone to their local school, their experience of the last school year would not have been as positive. One third thought their experience would have been 'about the same'. Similarly, about two-thirds felt their current school was better than their previous school in terms of helping them to 'stay away from bad influences'.

Most pupils thought that they had access to more extra-curricular opportunities, and opportunities to excel in something, whether academic or extra-curricular. 'I have the opportunity to get involved in various [extra-curricular activities], which I didn't attend at my old school due to money and lack of facilities'.

Pupils mentioned that they were enjoying undertaking activities such as sports, drama or working towards a Duke of Edinburgh award which were helping them to make friends

I didn't really think about university before as no one I knew had been or was planning to go ... I didn't really know what university was like ... so it worried me. I didn't know how I would pay for it and thought it would be a waste of money.

It is now realistic to aim to become a lawyer whereas at my old school it seemed impossible, as even the number of people applying to go to university was low. But now with plenty of career help and more contacts it seems a more realistic goal.

I used to just watch football all the time and play football, it was all about sports. But when I came here I've got more to do with my life than football.

There is a difference in ambition - you do notice it. Everyone at the school wants to go to uni and be successful. At home, a lot of people don't really look to the future.

outside their House. One pupil, however, noted that it could be challenging to keep on top of academic work as well as taking advantage of the other activities school offered: 'Because of all of the extracurricular activity, you can lose your way ever so slightly. I would have spent more of my time working if I'd stayed at home [and gone to day school]. But the benefits of doing the extracurricular activities outweigh that'.

4.2.3 Improving communication and social skills and access to extra-curricular and social opportunities

Pupils frequently reported that their boarding school education had developed their **communication and social skills and opened up more extra-curricular and social opportunities**. Most pupils reported that they had lots of friends at school. In some cases, these new friendships had opened up other opportunities. For example, three pupils had been to visit, or had plans to visit, school friends at their homes in the holidays or to go abroad with them. One pupil had had a lot of opportunities to socialise with peers from different backgrounds to his own: 'I've stayed with a lot of friends, and seen a different way of life. It's important to see how people live; it helps explain how they are'. Pupils reported that they felt more confident in social situations at their new school than they did at their old.

Staff were positive about how pupils had adapted and developed socially, and gave examples of how pupils had demonstrated their communication and social skills and broadened their awareness of different cultures and backgrounds. This included making friends from varied backgrounds and nationalities in school, welcoming visitors to the school, joining the student council and volunteering in the local community, which helped to broaden their social awareness. As one staff member commented: '[I am] impressed how students have managed relationships and engage, on a day to day basis, with a number of international students (with widely varying backgrounds)'.

Staff responses emphasised the significance of pupils becoming more aware of the range of backgrounds people come from. One staff member suggested pupils could not help but do this given that the school has 'students from 44 different nations'.

Increasing independence, confidence and resilience

Interviewed pupils emphasised the **greater independence** and personal responsibility that they had at boarding school (for example, in getting themselves ready for the school day, managing their time to ensure that they got their prep done as well as had time to engage in extra-curricular activities and managing their own money). As set out above and in Section 4.2.2, pupils also recognised a growth in their own **resilience**, through settling in at their new school and adapting to living away from home.

Several pupils mentioned that they had **grown in confidence**, although some perceived themselves as having always been confident. Pupils were somewhat more likely to feel that that they were more confident speaking in class and in their academic ability at their new school than they were at their old. Younger pupils seemed to perceive themselves as having changed more in this aspect, having initially been shy and nervous when meeting new people. All staff felt pupils had developed in confidence, and often in independence; one said this was the 'most noticeable development over the first year'. Two commented that this was due to the focus on independent decision making and organisation: 'Both [pupils] were

resilient, independent and confident to begin with ... However, this has gone up a notch given the new pool of personalities they are surrounded with on a daily basis'. Pupils' experiences of these types of benefits are presented below.

If they [a peer] said what's your name I would tell them but I wouldn't talk unless they asked me something. Now I just talk and talk and talk!

I think I've got a lot more confident, in ... doing these talks [talking to other young people about boarding school]. I know that if I was at my other school ... I would be so nervous I wouldn't be able to stand up and talk in public. ... at school, people help and encourage you to try new things ... and build your confidence.

Most of them [the sports] I've never done before, I feel really proud that I've tried them. I like rugby and hockey 'cos I got into the teams, that felt really good.

4.2.4 Creation of a stable, secure environment

Pupils acknowledged that their boarding schools provided **stable and safe environments**. Pupils who were interviewed generally felt that their home lives and original schools had also been secure and safe, although some had come from difficult family backgrounds or were at risk of negative social influences. One pupil commented that this feeling of stability and safety depended on your social group, giving the example of not feeling comfortable when friends at his previous school were getting into trouble. Another young person recognised that the boarding environment has provided her a home environment and security, which she was not getting elsewhere. Pupils were somewhat more likely to respond about their current situation (compared to how they felt at their previous school) that they were happy at school, felt positive about themselves, felt valued by teachers and were cared for by the school community.

4.3 Would SpringBoard pupils recommend SpringBoard to other young people?

Most pupils would wholeheartedly recommend that other young people apply to SpringBoard, describing their experience as an 'unmissable opportunity' that would change their life for the better. A number added that it could be hard work and that there were challenges, but that it was worth persevering with it. The advice offered by pupils is set out in the box below.

Definitely go for it, it's an opportunity you can't miss, it would bother you for the rest of your life.

Go for it, it's a really good experience, once in a lifetime.

Definitely go for it. It opens so many doors and opportunities that I was unlikely to get at my old school. You meet so many people and it's nice to have a change in life ... get involved in as many things as you can. Talk to a lot of people. Make the most of it.

I would tell these students that despite any negatives they may be worried about now, to stick with it as things get easier and this is the best decision I have ever made.

It's not an easy journey but it's worth it.

That they should try their hardest as it is 100% worth it.

Get help with the work if you're struggling.

Make sure you want to do it. There's no point pretending you want to do it if you don't. You have to be committed to the cause ... You can't decide to stop being part of the school when you are not there. You need it to be part of your life ... It's a little bit intense, but that's good, you relish it.

5. Impacts on schools, families and home communities

As well as seeking to transform the lives of the young people who gain a funded place at a boarding school, SpringBoard has broader aims to impact on the member schools and pupils, and on the home communities of SpringBoard pupils. These are set out below.

Intended impacts on boarding school communities (including staff, pupils, parents and alumni)	Intended impacts on home communities of SpringBoard pupils
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• pupils' awareness of social diversity• pupils' appreciation of privileges• increased job satisfaction for staff involved with SpringBoard pupils• engagement of present and past school community in a collaborative effort to raise bursary funds for future SpringBoard pupils.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• broadened horizons and raised aspirations of young people and families• benefits from SpringBoard pupils acting as mentors and role models• increased family pride at achievements of the SpringBoard pupils.

We did not consult directly with SpringBoard pupils' families or home communities, or with pupils in the member schools, as this was beyond the scope of the evaluation budget. However, we did ask SpringBoard pupils and staff in schools to comment on the perceived impacts on the following groups:

- staff in member schools and the wider school community
- families and carers of SpringBoard pupils
- SpringBoard pupils' home communities.

This section sets out the impacts they identified.

5.1 Impacts on staff and the wider school community

5.1.1 Impacts on school staff

School staff largely felt that there had been positive impacts on themselves and their colleagues as a result of SpringBoard pupils joining the school. Impacts included:

- additional and welcomed opportunities and responsibilities

- satisfaction and personal development from the school working with more pupils from deprived or vulnerable backgrounds. In one case, training was provided to encourage all staff to understand some of the social issues faced by SpringBoard pupils. One member of staff commented that 'dealing with a wider variety of pastoral challenges and backgrounds certainly adds skills to the tutoring team'
- enhanced communication skills developed through liaising with parents whose first language is not English.

One respondent noted a 'slight negative' they experienced, through 'taking flak' when a bursary pupil does something wrong: 'Other staff sometimes expect the same thing of a SpringBoard pupil as they might from an academic scholar, for example'.

Two schools felt that there had not been any particular impacts on their school staff, but this was because they had been working with bursary pupils for some time.

5.1.2 Impacts on SpringBoard pupils' peers

School staff reported that SpringBoard pupils' peers had reacted positively to them joining the school. Some staff commented that their school had a tradition of offering bursaries, so peers were used to having bursary pupils among their friends. In one school, pupils were said to be particularly interested in the home lives of SpringBoard pupils. School staff also noted an enhanced awareness of social diversity and awareness of the breadth of different educational experiences. In one case, the SpringBoard pupil was said to have 'brought a breath of fresh air to his boarding house'. Approximately half of all school survey respondents felt that having SpringBoard pupils in school had raised awareness of social diversity and broken down prejudice. The other half of respondents stated that they did not know if these impacts had been realised.

Two schools noted negative impacts, related to jealousy regarding SpringBoard pupils' access to the bursary, particularly where parents were struggling to pay school fees or where 'extras' were being paid for by SpringBoard.

5.1.3 Impacts on the wider school community

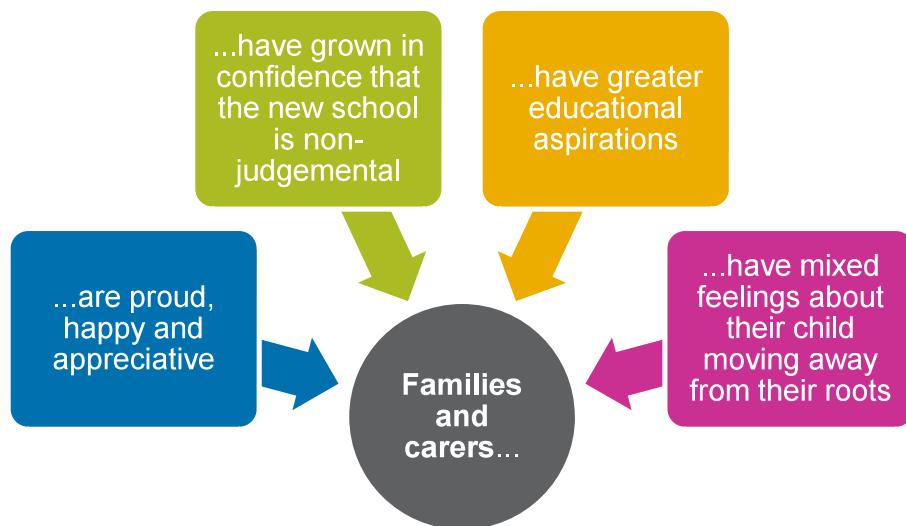
Impacts on the wider school community include:

- positive contributions to the school community through, for example, pupils being elected as prefects or joining the local cadet core. One school was confident that the pupils would make unique contributions to the school community as potential for this was considered during the selection process
- further strengthening an accepting and tolerant school ethos
- enhancing the likelihood that the school will continue to work with SpringBoard or to support other bursary pupils in a similar way.

5.2 Impacts on families and carers

We have not consulted directly with families and carers to find out about the impacts of their child having gained a place at a boarding school through SpringBoard, as this was beyond the scope of the evaluation budget. Instead, we asked pupils and staff in schools if they were aware of the impacts on families. In some cases, respondents did not feel able to comment, but four main impacts emerged, as set out in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Impacts on families/carers



The pupils described their families' positive reactions to them getting a place at boarding school, and felt supported. Perhaps unsurprisingly, pupils reported that their parents had expressed pride in their child, and gratitude to Springboard, its partners and partner schools. Mixed feelings were also apparent as their child was moving away from "their roots". However, this was often deemed positive, particularly where their roots involved risk of gang violence, for example. Families were said to feel sad as they would miss their child, but very happy and proud of what they had achieved.

The pupils felt that their families were generally aware of their school life and were kept well informed by the school. Most pupils referred to regular telephone contact with their families. Interestingly, three pupils felt that their family might never fully understand what it is like to attend their school, as being at a boarding school was so far removed from their home situation. However these pupils were happy about this, confessing that they too found some elements of their new life 'weird'.

SpringBoard have been keeping notes of impacts on families that partners and member schools are reporting. These include: the cousins of a bursary candidate aspiring higher at their respective schools; the mother of a Year 11 SpringBoard candidate engaging with her son's current boarding school which is the first time that she has engaged with education;

and the father of a Year 8 SpringBoard candidate becoming more engaged with family life since visiting the school where his son might be placed.

5.3 Impacts on pupils' home communities

We have not consulted directly with members of pupils' home communities to find out if there are impacts from their friend or someone from their community having gained a place at a boarding school through SpringBoard, as this activity was beyond the scope of the evaluation budget. However, we asked pupils and staff in schools if they were aware of any impacts on pupils' home communities.

Pupils described their friends' positive reactions to them getting a place at boarding school. Most pupils were maintaining friendships from their old school or community and largely described positive reactions from their peer group. Two pupils felt that there was some understandable jealousy or feelings of envy from their peer group: 'If I hadn't got a place, I would have been jealous of those who did'.

Four of the pupils who were interviewed had spoken to other young people who are applying to SpringBoard. This was through sharing their experiences, answering questions and allaying young people's concerns at organised events in their home communities. The pupils found this to be a rewarding experience and felt that it had helped or inspired other young people to aspire to a place at a boarding school, as the following comments illustrate.

I was quite excited to be honest, certainly for them. When I went through the process we were the first year so we didn't have anyone who'd done it before to tell us what it was like. It was nice to be able to see how I was 12 months ago, they had the same questions I did, it was nice to tell them exactly what they would want to know and actually help them. I did feel it was useful for them to have someone who's going through the exact same process.

I have gone and spoken to people, to potential candidates. I did a few sessions and I was preparing them, telling them some dos and don'ts. I think it was helpful. You can see what your work has done, that you have inspired people to do the same.

In most cases, school staff did not feel able to comment on any impacts on pupils' home communities. However, they were aware that some pupils were acting as a role model. One staff member noted a 'potential ripple effect' suggesting that the influence of a pupil attending their school could influence other young people and the community more broadly. SpringBoard have been monitoring this 'ripple effect' through contact with their partners and partner schools. Some examples of the ways in which SpringBoard pupils have impacted on their home communities and peers are set out in Figure 5.

Figure 5: Ways in which SpringBoard pupils have impacted on their home communities⁵

Community members of a Year 12 SpringBoard beneficiary (not just friends and family) lined the streets to wave him off as he left for boarding school.

Families in the community from which the SpringBoard pupils come want to send their children to the local secondary school associated with SpringBoard. They want to do this after knowing that doors have been opened to pupils to attend boarding school.

SpringBoard Year 11 candidates have requested more work from their current secondary school head teacher as a result of the potential bursary place. The Headteacher was reported to be impressed with this.

Two SpringBoard member schools provided additional support (master classes for young people) via a partner organisation.

A partner organisation has reported that the opportunity given to their first ever SpringBoard pupil to attend boarding school 'has had a real impact on the other students, as they start to realise what might be possible for themselves. SpringBoard has opened up more than one window for a young person and their family'.

⁵ Source: The SpringBoard Bursary Foundation, 2014.

6. How could the programme be improved?

Pupils and school staff were asked their views on how the SpringBoard programme could be improved. In the majority of cases, respondents struggled to identify any potential improvements. They were extremely happy with the programme and how it was being run and very positive about their experience of working with SpringBoard. Staff in one school commented that 'SpringBoard have the energy and enthusiasm of a new organisation and are open to new ideas and initiatives'. However, three staff members and three pupils (of the nine who were interviewed) did suggest some ways in which the scheme could be improved. These are set out in Figure 6 below.

Figure 6: Improvements suggested by pupils and school staff

Pupils' suggestions	School staff suggestions
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shorten the application process (to reduce the stress associated with waiting to find out if applicants have been successful)• Offer interview practice• Have current pupils share their experiences: '<i>Get people to come back to speak to applicants and give personal insight. It means a lot more when you hear it from a student who's actually had the experiences. Anyone can tell you about it, but from a student it's more realistic</i>'• Ensure partners are tailoring the extent and type of support they offer to individual pupils• Focus on identifying applicants for entry earlier than Year 12 (the pupil suggested that it may have been easier to settle in had he joined the school at an earlier stage).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide further opportunities for staff to network with staff from other schools and share learning and effective practice (building on the success of the training day)• Make the feedback requirements and timings more explicit• Minimise the number of pupil surveys to ensure each survey is given enough attention.

7. Conclusions and recommendations

The early findings from the impact assessment are overwhelmingly positive; pupils and staff have reported remarkably few negative consequences of pupils moving to boarding schools. There are effective working relationships between the partner organisations, original and member schools, pupils and families/carers. Providing disadvantaged pupils with a place at a boarding school is leading to the impacts intended for pupils and member schools. For pupils, these include (amongst others) an improved academic experience, broadened horizons and aspirations, and greater confidence and resilience. There are promising signs that impacts are ‘rippling out’ to the home communities of SpringBoard pupils. The unique and comprehensive network of support that the SpringBoard model aims to provide appears central to its success.

Recommendations for the ongoing development of SpringBoard

- Partners have a key role to play in supporting young people before and during their time at school, including in the school holidays. **Some partners need to contact the pupil(s) they have placed more regularly, particularly during the pupil's first few months at their new school.**
- Many pupils struggle with the level of school work at first. Some partners have arranged specific academic support for pupils before they join their new school, and/or during school holidays (for instance, tuition in maths). **All partners should support pupils to prepare for the expected standard of work, by sharing information from the member school about the academic requirements and syllabuses used with the pupil, and by brokering additional tuition where needed.**
- A number of member schools have provided additional, personalised tuition to students in subjects in which they have been used to a different teaching style and/or syllabus and have struggled to adjust. This has been particularly important in the first term. **It would be useful for schools more universally to assess pupils' individual needs and provide this additional tuition, where required.**
- It is important that SpringBoard encourages the growing number of member schools and partners to continue to share effective practice, by offering further events and brokering networks to support this.**
- Partner organisations should ensure they create opportunities for SpringBoard pupils to speak to other young people in their home communities about their experiences;** pupils value these opportunities and they can help to promote raised aspirations.
- There is emerging evidence of a ‘ripple effect’ on pupils’ home communities. **Carrying out direct consultations with families/carers and others in pupils’ home communities would offer more robust evidence of the broader aim.**

8. References

Lamont, E., Flack, J. and Straw, S. (2010). *NFER Evaluation of the Arnold Foundation for Rugby School: Summary Report*. Slough: NFER. [online]. Available: <http://www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/RAF01/> [10 October, 2014]

Appendix 1

Partner organisations and schools that helped to place pupils for the 2013/14 academic year

Clarion Voice
Eastside Young Leaders' Academy
George Green's School, London
Hawick High School, Roxburghshire
Hope Opportunity Trust
IntoUniversity
Virtual School East Sussex
Wellington Academy, Andover

Member schools that accepted pupils for the 2013/14 academic year

Eton College
King Edward's School, Witley
Lord Wandsworth College
Marlborough College
Merchiston Castle School
Oundle School
Rugby School
St Bede's School
Uppingham School
Wellington Academy

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**National Foundation for
Educational Research**
The Mere, Upton Park
Slough, Berks SL1 2DQ

T: 01753 574123
F: 01753 691632
E: enquiries@nfer.ac.uk
www.nfer.ac.uk